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## REFORM OF SECONDARY INSTRUCTION IN PERU

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R. L. PACKARD  
Washington, D. C.

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By a decree of November 25, 1905, the ministry of public instruction of Peru directed circulars to be sent to the various colleges or institutions of secondary instruction, and to writers upon education, throughout the country requesting criticisms upon the existing law (of 1902) regulating that grade of education and asking for suggestions of alterations which seemed to them advisable to be embodied in a new law. The responses to these circulars were published by the minister of public instruction in two volumes (Lima, 1906), and a brief review of them will illustrate the manner in which the proposed reform of education is to be carried on in Peru. In its report for 1904 the United States Bureau of Education published a summary of a report upon a similar reform movement in primary education in Argentine, which showed that the authorities of that country were awake to the need of a more practical character in their common-school curriculum. This idea that public education should look more toward supplying efficiency for practical life appears abundantly in the discussions in the present volumes from Peru. Latin Americans are fully aware of what is going on in the world, but they are also naturally conservative and are conscious that their own antecedents, traditions, and characteristics of race must all be considered when reforms are proposed.

As there is no explanatory introduction to the volumes before us containing the existing law and the proposed changes, the nature of the changes can only be inferred from the individual reports or criticisms. We will, therefore, take a few of the principal points and observe their treatment by the various writers.

The opinion seems pretty general among the teachers consulted that the four-year course (of the law of 1902) was too

brief and too crowded, and a course of five and sometimes of six years is recommended, in the latter case with a "bifurcation" of the course after the fourth year, one set of classes preparing for the university and the other for practical life. In many cases a preparatory course is strongly recommended for the first year, on account of the unfitness of the first-year pupils to take secondary studies. Perhaps locality has something to do with the complaints on this score, which appear in the reports from the secondary schools that are largely attended by natives (i. e., those of non-Spanish descent). In some cases it is recommended to establish specialized sections as the logical end of secondary instruction. The studies in these sections should not, it is argued, be purely literary or scientific, but relate to commerce and industries, mining and agriculture. Proficiency in these, it is urged, is what is needed in Peru, and some of the writers deplore the neglect of such branches while the literary or "pure science" studies continue to produce, in those students who are unable to attend the university, unfortunates who are not fully prepared to be either advocates or merchants, but who have learned just enough to despise labor, and who drag out a miserable hand-to-mouth existence. This class is always ready for revolution.

Many of the reports from the colleges propose new plans of studies in which the "modern" spirit is conspicuous. An extreme example is as follows:

First year—botany, arithmetic, practical and demonstrated, religion, Spanish grammar and composition, zoölogy, physics, geography (physical, political, and commercial); second year—Spanish grammar and composition, elementary algebra, geography of Peru, history of Peru, physics, elementary geometry, astronomical geography, geology and mineralogy; third year—inorganic chemistry, physics, trigonometry, ancient and mediaeval history, anthropology and psychology, physics, literature, logic; fourth year—mechanics, organic chemistry, hygiene, modern and contemporaneous history, constitution of Peru, astronomy, morals and sociology, political economy; fifth year—section of commerce and industries, agriculture and cattle-raising, and mining. Under these headings are included bookkeeping, commercial arithmetic and geography, and geography of Peru, applied and natural history (Peruvian), commercial correspondence, languages and drawing, industrial chemistry, merchandise and trade, commercial legislation; agricultural botany and zoölogy, chemistry and mineralogy.

applied to agriculture, geography of the fauna and flora of Peru, meteorology, surveying, machinery, hygiene, legislation relating to labor, agricultural industries, mineralogy and geology of Peru, trigonometry, surveying, assaying, drawing, electro-chemistry and metallurgy, chemistry of metals, mining mechanics and physics, legislation, and drawing.

In the foregoing, it will be seen, there is no mention of Latin or Greek, or the humanities, or aesthetics. This omission, however, so far from meeting with general approval, encounters strong opposition from other teachers, nor does it seem quite natural in a country whose language is itself so nearly Latin, to leave the schools in ignorance of their original mother-tongue. One teacher argues that, even if secondary education is only intended to form future farmers, engineers, merchants, and manufacturers, young men who are taught the appropriate branches for these careers alone without any instruction in morals or aesthetics, would become the mere slaves of their daily work. As to Latin, another teacher remarks as follows:

In the opinion of some, our education ought to have an immediate object; it should provide that the majority of pupils after four or five years' study should have a certain varnish of knowledge sufficient to enable them to earn a living. This is the view of many persons who consider themselves practical. But we must not accept this view. Imagine a society in which those who are regarded as its best-educated representatives should be imbued with the fatal idea that there is nothing in life more important than the pursuit of facile and immediate profit. Such a society would speedily and necessarily be converted into an aggregate of ferocious egotists, without ideals, without principle, without virtue. Yet such a society would be the result of a purely utilitarian system of pedagogy. It is the function of the humanities and ancient languages to give a wider scope to secondary education. Latin should be replaced in the programmes. In some countries the importance of Latin is disputed; still, Latin will survive for a long time to come. The moderns cannot forget the debt they owe to antiquity, nor should they renounce the noble privilege of remaining in direct communication with the grand ideas and harmonious modes of expression of the ancients. If a general culture of the mind rests upon fundamental principles, how can literary culture—the humanities—fulfil its object if it ignores the greatest manifestations of genius? Besides, it is an error to believe that antiquity merely represents a classical tradition. Antiquity is still a living phase in the modern world: it is a part of that moral existence which has preserved its unity in the midst of a constantly changing civilization. Should we, then, under pretext of creating an entirely modern education, suppress the ancient

languages? That is to say, should we cut ourselves off from all contact with the past? If we should suppress them, our students would be led through a cycle of human knowledge without knowing anything of the marvelous productions of the ancient mind. The learning of Latin, the synthetic language of the great Roman writers develops harmoniously all the intellectual faculties. Nothing equals the dignity of Latin. Formerly the spoken language of the ruling nation of the Old World, it has left its imprint upon the languages, customs, and laws of all civilized nations. From a more utilitarian point of view, we should remember that Latin is the etymological source of all the neo-Latin languages and consequently, a course in Latin is a most valuable aid to the understanding of Spanish. Furthermore, since Latin literature is studied in the University of Lima, it is necessary to teach Latin in the secondary schools for those who intend to take degrees in law, medicine, or letters at the university.

He points out, finally, that even in countries where there has been a determined effort to exclude Latin from the school programmes, or at least limit its study to a minimum, as in France, a reaction in favor of retaining it is now setting in. Another writer points out that there would be no need of wasting time in learning an artificial language, like Volapük or Esperanto, if Latin were, universally studied, as formerly. There is by no means a unanimity of opinion on this question of Latin, and it will be interesting to see what the decision of the ministry will finally be.

Taking up some of the reports seriatim, we note the following points: It is complained that defective preparation necessitates much repetition of instruction. In some cases the complaint is that the teachers themselves are not properly prepared, which leads to the recommendation of a normal school. The need of such a school, again, is disputed by others who think that the university affords all the general instruction necessary for teachers, and that if a special practical course in pedagogy were added in the university with one year's teaching in a college, better results would be reached than if a normal school were established. The writer reviews the history of normal schools in Europe, Japan, and the United States. The example of the *école normale* at Paris is cited to show that a school originally intended to instruct professors of superior instruction may become as much of a university and research institution as universities themselves. The reports are full, as might be expected, of suggestions for improv-

ing the programmes; some teachers asking for longer courses, others requesting changes to accommodate ill-prepared pupils with frequent examinations, while *surmenage* or overwork, owing to the inadequacy of the four-year course, is frequently discussed. It is interesting to note that the students themselves were sometimes consulted by their professors in preparing opinions upon the programmes. For example, a professor quotes from a periodical published by the students of the college of Guadalupe, a passage complaining of the curtailing of the course from six to four years without a corresponding reduction in studies.

In a few cases portions of the reports are written in "dialect," so to speak; that is to say, in the same facile, but fallacious and corrupting, technical language which some writers on education in this country have adopted from sociology. It is not good English, but is a quasi-scientific-philosophical-metaphysical-pedantic cant, the terms and similes of which are taken indiscriminately from the mechanical, physical, and biological sciences, with modes of expression taken over from German into English without apology. The dialect is at once recognizable even when disguised in Spanish. Here are a few specimens:

Education is, generally speaking, the molding of the individual to the collectivity. . . . In this evolutive process of each individual toward the ideal type which society offers him as a whole, and of society itself toward the most perfect individual types, there is a continual mutual exchange of defects and perfections between society and the individual, the resultant of which constitutes civilization and progress. . . . The fundamental law of this process is the instability of the homogeneous and the production of tendencies for the heterogeneous. . . . Liberty of action is required by the forces of nature to insure their maximum effect. These forces are always in pairs, so that to every action there corresponds a reaction which is peculiar to it, and the constancy of this opposition in each pair maintains it in its individuality, whence result the stability and harmony of the whole, and that mobile equilibrium which constitutes the order of the universe. . . . Hence, too, result the fixed laws which determine the stability of the system, so that when an individual energy fails to conform thereto, such energy is separated from its own pair and invades the field of action of another energy . . . contrary to the general order, and consequently producing instability or disorder. . . . Every language is a sociological organism which represents a series of evolutions in human activity.

It appears, too, that in Peru, as in the United States, even women have been infected with this pedantic language of sociology which is so fatal to taste and delicacy.

While many of the writers of these reports show that they are familiar with the history and present condition of secondary education in other countries, several of them go into the subject exhaustively and review the developments of the last twenty-five years in Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, and the United States, quoting government decrees and the works of the well-known authors on the subject in those countries, together with programmes of studies of the French lycées, the German gymnasia and real schools, and the high schools of the United States. The principal authority quoted on the United States is Compayré's report of secondary education at the Chicago Exposition. It appears that the example of France has been followed in Peru more than that of Germany, but with due regard to the special requirements of Peru, the difference consisting principally in the omission of Latin and Greek in the special secondary courses in Peru. The high schools and colleges of the United States have also served as types which have been followed to some extent in Peru, the continuous progress from the preparatory schools through the various grades, including the high schools, to the colleges, being well esteemed. The United States, says the writer of the long article from which we quote, has understood better than France the object of establishments of public instruction, making of them places of training for the more or less elevated purposes of life, separating general culture from special training and establishing three gradations of this general culture—the primary school, the high school, and the college—in which may be educated all classes of society, those of the lowest (or poorest) class being educated in the primary schools, where, with the intermediate grammar school, they may complete a course which will enable them to enter business, while the continuity of the grades is not broken, but extends to the colleges. This writer insists that the classical models are not so suitable for Peruvians to follow in secondary education as the Anglo-Saxon spirit. The ancient idea of the unity of the state and the subjection of the

individual thereto should be replaced by individual initiative and liberty, the Teutonic idea. Another writer emphasizes this view by declaring (using again the modern quasi-scientific dialect) that the classical education which was planted in Peru in colonial times, which is *static* and opposed to the dynamical idea of free movement, the modern spirit, is yielding to the *positivist* system which the fatal law of the struggle for existence imposes upon the individual in modern society.

A few extracts from an address by Dr. Pedro A. Labarthe, professor of pedagogics in the university at Lima, will illustrate the comprehensive view with which the remodeling of the secondary courses in Peru is being discussed. He says:

The origin of "bifurcation" in secondary education is easy to trace: it arose from the impotence of the old classical instruction to prepare young men for the so-called scientific careers, and on the other hand from the utter impotence of "modernism" to give a sufficient preparation for the liberal professions. The antagonism between classicism and utilitarianism produced bifurcation.

He then reviews briefly the history of this movement in Europe, the United States, and Latin America. Peru adopted bifurcation in 1872, but retained that division of courses for only ten years. This separation of studies he says, is not a complete solution of the problem involved, but only a compromise, for a proof of which statement he refers to the example of Germany which he calls the normal school of the world, and Germany did not adopt bifurcation, but established parallel institutions, the gymnasia and the real schools, both of which prepare for the universities. His argument is against the proposed plan (bifurcation) largely on the ground that precocious specialization destroys equilibrium. He adds these remarkable words regarding the Peruvian race:

Well endowed as it is with intelligence, and easy to lead, it is still uneducated and needs an *integral* education. As to mental qualities there are two types; one inert as the Andes themselves, devoted to tradition with Asiatic immobility and easily formed into docile soldiers, laborious farm hands, or good scholars; while the other type is full of energy, but unstable, of a lively imagination, changeable in its feelings, impelled by impulses which are often not fulfilled, full of gigantic projects, but with pigmean realization; and both these types require a uniform education to produce an equilibrium between them.



He returns to the history of modern education in France, beginning with the circular of Jules Simon in 1872, which, he says, gave the first blow to Latin and Greek in secondary instruction; mentions the continuation of that movement in 1880, the revival of classicism in 1885, the creation of modern education in 1890, and in a brief paragraph recites the vicissitudes of this branch of education in France down to 1902. Incidentally he mentions that the educational ideas of the United States were taken from England and Germany; some Latin republics, like Argentine and Uruguay, sought inspiration for their systems in the United States; others, like Chile and the Central American republics, in Germany; while Peru has always followed France. His own preference for an educational model is Germany. However, he adds, modern democracy has created its own school, which is distinct from the old aristocratic school, and the people whose education has been chiefly formed by the spirit of a selective democracy is that of the United States. Peruvian reformers must therefore study American educational ideals and methods. This course appeals to him the more because, he adds, if the Peruvians are Americans and therefore democratic, they must look to that people when they consider their own system of public education, especially for the reason that, notwithstanding the English origin of the United States the methods of instruction there are now largely German.

Altogether there are over fifty reports in these two volumes, from as many different colleges and institutions throughout the country, some half-dozen of them by women. Some of the teachers were educated in Germany.